

the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventh.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5034 of March 21, 1983

Afghanistan Day, 1983

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The tragedy of Afghanistan continues as the valiant and courageous Afghan freedom fighters persevere in standing up against the brutal power of the Soviet invasion and occupation. The Afghan people are struggling to reclaim their freedom, which was taken from them when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December of 1979.

In this three-year period the Soviet Union has been unable to subjugate Afghanistan. The Soviet forces are pitted against an extraordinary people who, in their determination to preserve the character of their ancient land, have organized an effective and still spreading country-wide resistance. The resistance of the Afghan freedom fighters is an example to all the world of the invincibility of the ideals we in this country hold most dear, the ideals of freedom and independence.

We must also recognize that the sacrifices required to maintain this resistance are very high. Millions have gone into exile as refugees. We will probably never know the numbers of people killed and maimed, poisoned and gassed, of the homes that have been destroyed, and of the lives that have been shattered and stricken with grief.

It is, therefore, incumbent upon us as Americans to reflect on the events in Afghanistan, to think about the agony which these brave people bear, and to maintain our condemnation of the continuing Soviet occupation. Our observance again this year of Afghanistan Day on March 21, the Afghan New Year, will recall for all the world America's unflagging sympathy for a determined people, its support for their refugees and commitment to achieving a political settlement for Afghanistan which will free that country from tyranny's yoke.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 65, has designated March 21, 1983 as "Afghanistan Day" and has requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of that day.

Ante, p. 41.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate March 21, 1983 as Afghanistan Day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventh.

RONALD REAGAN

Editorial Note: For the President's message of Mar. 21, 1983, on Afghanistan Day, see the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (vol. 19, p. 436).